

Mid-week Lent 4 Goliath taunted the Israelites for 40 days. 30th March 2022

For 40 Days Goliath taunted the Israelites.

You remember Sunday School.

Goliath was 10 or 12 foot high.

He had a bronze helmet and bronze armour, a bronze shield, and a giant spear.

For 40 days he laughed at the Israelites.

- *Why do you all line up for battle?*
- *Why do you all want to be killed?*
- *Don't do that – just choose one man.*
- *Choose one man if he's able to kill me, we will become your slaves; but if I kill him, you will become our slaves.*

What a challenge?

It says, *"King Saul and all the Israelites were terrified"*.

For 40 days he laughed at the Israelites.

That number 40 seems to be a time of testing and trial.

The Israelites were paralysed with fear – He's bigger, He's stronger. We're weak.

They were so scared of the physical.

Have you ever noticed that when we're under spiritual attack it presents as a physical attack ?

This physical challenge was a spiritual challenge – the god of Goliath verses the God of Israel.

You know some people seem to have everything go wrong – one thing after another.

Sometimes, it needs to be asked: "Is there a physical issue going on or is it a really a spiritual issue?"

Could it be a spiritual attack presenting as a physical attack?"

I've found out that spiritual attacks have a way of presenting as physical attacks.

Paul says? *...our struggle is not against flesh and blood [that's the physical], it's against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil... (Eph 6)*

Paul also reminds us that the chief weapon in spiritual war is Prayer.

If we're fighting the physical with physical, we will stand in fear like the Israelites – just staring and saying - they're too big, they're too strong, their spears are too sharp.

The shepherd boy says what about spiritual war – prayer – God's word.

For 40 days and nights the Israelites were just melting away with fear – not a single prayer - the people of God – the chosen race – and not a single prayer.

This was a spiritual battle presenting as a physical battle – all they could see was a physical giant - and what's more, they counted their loss before the battle even began.

Unfortunately, we tend to see our physical problems and struggles in non-spiritual terms. And because of that, we tend to seek non-spiritual solutions. We rely on our own strength.

David and Goliath are a perfect example of a spiritual battle presenting as a physical battle.

The physical aspects of this battle were terrifying.

David recognized straight away that this is a spiritual battle – this is a battle where God will be on his side.

David spoke to Saul, “Your Majesty, no one should be afraid of this Philistine! I will go and fight him”

Saul only saw a physical battle and refused to let David fight.

You're too small. You're too young. You have no experience.

David insisted.

Saul agrees to let David fight Goliath – physically. He puts a helmet, an armour, and a sword on David – ready for a physical fight.

David takes two steps and realises he can't even walk. He's never had an armour before – it's too restrictive, too heavy.

David throws the armour – the helmet, and the sword – some where.

For David this is a spiritual battle.

In full spiritual war mode David attacks - on his knees.

He makes a statement and here is where the battle was won – before the slingshot – before the stones: *“You are coming against me with sword and spear but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the Israelites, which you have defied.”*

He fought spiritually using the name above all names.

He picks up 5 little stones, smooth stones, against the mighty Goliath – that's not physical – that is spiritual.

What do you think of this?

If you read about all the battles Israel had with the local tribes – you discover Goliath had 4 giant brothers: Ishbi, Saph, Lahmi, and the other one is not named – he's simply called the one with 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot.

David picks up 5 stones? 5 giant brothers?

I wonder – was David taking on the whole Goliath clan – one stone for each.

I guess we have to wonder – but 5 stones? 5 Goliath brothers??

Are our physical battles a sign of a spiritual battle?

This could be a cruel question to someone who is seriously ill – it suggests you're not praying – you're not spiritual.

I just would like you to consider.

It's common sense to fight a physical battle physically, with medical help, – especially an illness.

It's also common sense to know that physical problems stem from Spiritual problems. Jesus healed physical problems spiritually through forgiveness.

God invites us to look beyond the physical battle and see there is a Spiritual battle going on – and fight it spiritually with God's word and with prayer.

Kings Saul and all other earthly kings invite us to stand and take on the physical battle physically – the thought is terrifying– it paralysed the Israelites for 40 days and 40 nights.

Jesus faced the devil after 40 days of fasting, hungry, tired, and vulnerable.

It presented as a physical battle – the temptations were physical.

Jesus attacked the physical battle spiritually: "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Of course the devil left him, and angels came and looked after him."

Jesus took on the ultimate physical fight – the devil and death – with no strength of his own whatsoever – only the weapons of spiritual war Prayer and God's word.

Let me put it to you behind every physical attack there is a spiritual war.

Jesus walked to the cross – on the way they beat him physically, they spat on him physically, they wagged their heads, and laughed at him physically, they killed him physically.

There is nothing more weak and pathetic than Jesus on the cross – if we look at his death physically.

But spiritually? As Paul Says:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Whatever battle you are fighting the evil one wants you to think physically – to fight fire with fire.

He wants to reduce you to King Saul – paralysed with fear.

The shepherd boy knew that what presented as an insurmountable physical battle, was a spiritual battle.

To win the spiritual battle, he'd have to enter the valley and trust God.

He had done it many times before.

You know that image of Jesus overlooking Jerusalem – thinking of the battle, and the suffering, and the cross all before him.

He could have stayed where He was, but He entered the valley to pray that God's will be done.

Let the shepherd boy teach us that you don't step out alone – you step out with Jesus – who has won every battle.

David's faith was born out of his experience of God standing by him in every situation - as he battled bears and lions and all sorts – it was normal for him to trust God in a fight.

It was second nature for him to walk into battle with Goliath and maybe his four brothers as well.

The God who serves us is capable of defeating any of the giants in our lives—fear, depression, financial issues, doubts of faith—if we know Jesus and His nature well enough to step out in faith.

David stepped out with a sling shot – pathetic really – and not with one stone but with 5 stones – he knew what the result would be.

Killing Goliath – maybe who knows?

Killing Goliath and his four brothers – maybe who knows?

Having God go with him and protect him – absolutely %100.

If God is on our side who can be against us. Amen.

Lord fear stops us from trusting you, from living life as you intended for us – help us by the power of your word – of your Holy Spirit – to trust you and step out bringing glory to your name. Amen.